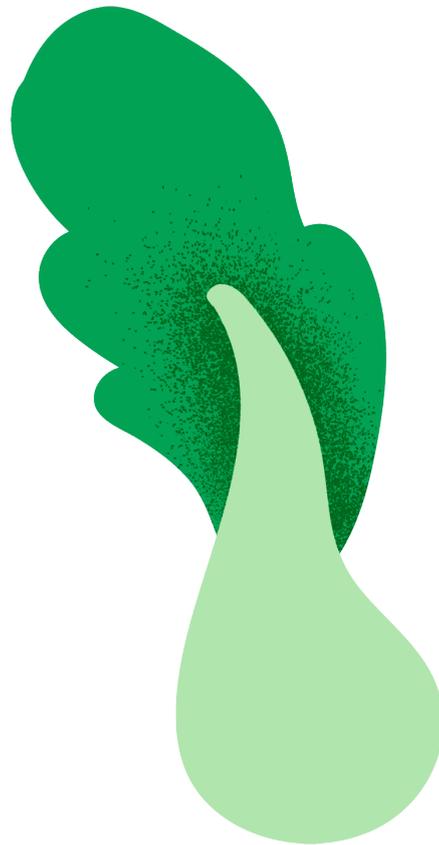


Seasonal Cycles

Year 4 – Humanities and Social Sciences

Year 5 – Technologies



(HASS, Geography; Yr 3, ACHASSK062)

The importance of Country/Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples who belong to a local area

(HASS, Geography; Yr 4, ACHASSK088)

The importance of environments, including natural vegetation, to animals and people

(HASS, Geography; Yr 4, ACHASSK089)

The custodial responsibility Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability

(HASS, Geography; Yr 5, ACHASSK112)

The influence of people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, on the environmental characteristics of Australian places

(Technologies; Yr 3&4, ACTDEK012)

Investigate food and fibre production and food technologies used in modern and traditional societies

(Technologies; Yr 5&6, ACTDEK021)

Investigate how and why food and fibre are produced in managed environments and prepared to enable people to grow and be healthy

Cross-curriculum priority

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Sustainability

Seasonal Cycles

Walking around the seasons of the year

This lesson is about helping students understand how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have traditionally relied on an acute knowledge of the cycles of the year for their food supply. It also helps students to recognise Australia's unique diversity of climatic zones for growers.

Equipment:

Tablets or computers with internet access for research

A selection of books from the resources list

Duration:

45 minutes plus several sessions for group work and reports

Location:

The classroom

Notes:

Tips

- We use a circular calendar instead of the Western linear calendar for these activities to make it easier for students to understand that the year is a cycle that rolls on with variations year-on-year.
- The Western calendar imposes breaks at the 'start' and 'end' of year that do not exist in nature. Try to avoid the words 'start' and 'end' during the lesson and emphasise the unending turning cycle of the seasons with physical and written/drawn activities.
- Under Resources, we have included plenty of examples of the seasonal cycles understood by major Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups. There may be one that relates to your area. You could also ask local Aboriginal education centres or individuals to help you build one specific to your area.

Seasonal Cycles – Inspiration

👁 Watch **The One with the Welcome**



- Ask students to take note of anything Aunty Dale and Aunty Di say about seasonal foods and the way the seasons work for their mobs.
- Watch Australian Screen Online 5 Seasons (<http://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/5-seasons/clip1/>) to get students thinking about how climate, weather and seasons relate to food.

Seasonal Cycles – Investigation

- Find out as a class how many seasons there are according to the traditional custodians of your region (it's not always six!)
- ❓ **Discuss:** for Aboriginal cultures, who have lived in and with this landscape for thousands of years, seasons aren't based on a written-down calendar but on close observation of plants, animals and the sky.
- Make a class list:**
- ❓ What sorts of things tell you the seasons are changing?
- ❓ Why would it be useful to know what flowers and animal behaviour help predict the weather? (E.g. if the koel, rain bird, arrives the storm season is likely to come soon.)
- ❓ Why would it also be useful to know the correlations between species? (E.g. when this plant is flowering, that means the goannas are laying their eggs.)
- ❓ What other cultures like to live close to nature? (E.g. Japan – cherry blossom season – <https://www.nippon.com/en/features/h00124/>)
- A lovely book to help students prepare for researching their local seasons is *Walking with the Seasons in Kakadu*, by Diane Lukas. (Other useful sources can be found in Resources.)

Walking the Circle

- Create a circular calendar. One way to do this is to ask all students to organise themselves by their birth date and stand in a circle. Call out where January is and give the class time to sort into a whole year in a circle. December birthdays will be next to January so we can run around the cycle many times (no start or end 'break' in the year).
- Ask students to name a favourite food that is available on their birthday. To set the tone (so not everyone says 'pizza', go first and say a fruit or vegetable that you love that is available in YOUR birth month, such as cherries and zucchini in summer, plums and pumpkins in autumn, oranges and beets in winter and strawberries and broad beans in spring.)
- Move around the circle and get students to say favourite fruits and vegetables from their birthday season. To let people have a second go roll right past December and keep going without a stop. Allow the rest of the class to call out suggestions if anyone stops. Some students might be challenged by the idea that fruit and vegetables are not available in equal measure all year round.

Research Cycles

- Divide students into roughly equal groups.
- Depending on birth dates, it may be possible to divide the class into groups by one month or two-month clusters.

Students work in their groups to answer the following questions:

- ❓ In our region, how many seasons are there?
- ❓ Our birthdays fall into which local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander seasons? (What is the season name or names?)
- ❓ What fruits, flowers, edible seeds, nuts and vegetables would local cultures eat in this season?
- ❓ What other food sources would they seek out? (E.g. crocodile eggs, goanna, seasonal fish species.)
- Student groups prepare a report and presentation to share with the class. When taken together, all of the group reports should (hopefully) cover the whole year.

Welcome to School

- It would be wonderful if your class were able to invite local elders to come to school to share their stories and knowledge of foods indigenous to your area.
- Several Aboriginal language apps are available, and it is increasingly feasible for students to find the words for common food items in the language or languages of local cultures. Make a class word list based on what each group finds out.

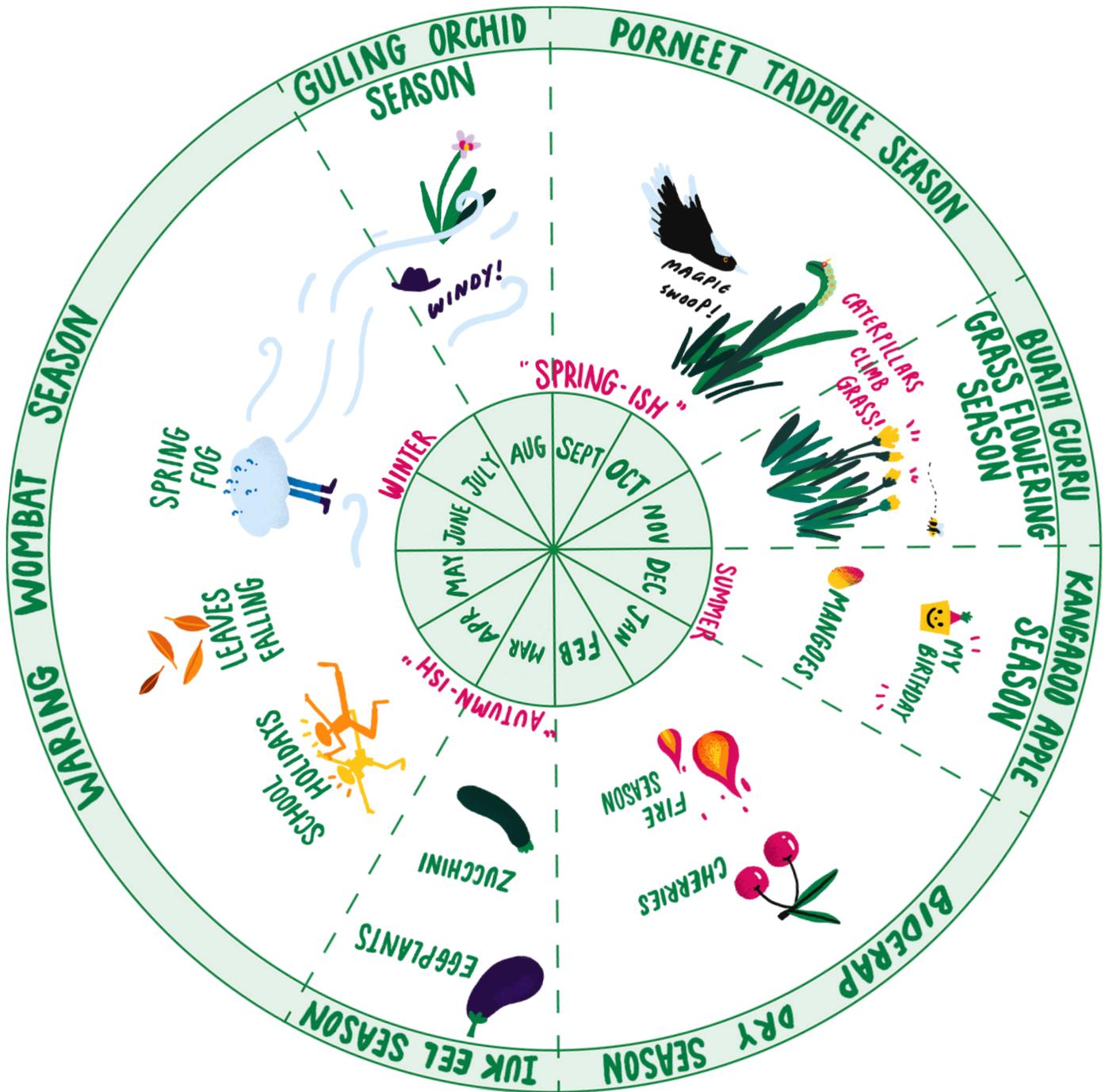
Hold a discussion comparing all of the seasons that the student groups cover:

- ❓ Do students think that any of these seasons would have been 'hungry' seasons?
- ❓ Are gaps in the year's food supply likely to be attributed to climate?
- ❓ Or could it be that knowledge gaps exist and we are yet to hear about what was eaten in these seasons?
- ❓ How would students propose to close such knowledge gaps?

Resources

- ◇ ABC Gold Coast – Indigenous food through the seasons: yams: <http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2012/05/25/3603014.htm>
- ◇ ABC Splash – Indigenous seasons across northern Australia (video, duration 1:42): <http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/media/1771788/indigenous-seasons-across-northern-australia>
- ◇ Adams, Jeanie. (1990). Pigs and honey. Norwood, SA : Omnibus Books.
- ◇ Australian Screen Online – 5 Seasons (video, duration 1:39): <http://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/5-seasons/clip1/>
- ◇ Burarrwanga, Lakak. et al. (2013). Welcome to my country. Crows Nest, NSW : Allen & Unwin
- ◇ Bureau of Meteorology – Indigenous weather knowledge: <http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/>
- ◇ CSIRO – About the Indigenous Seasons Calendars:<http://www.csiro.au/en/Research/Environment/Land-management/Indigenous/Indigenous-calendars/About-the-calendars>
- ◇ CSIRO – Larrakia – Gooniyandi seasons calendar: <http://www.csiro.au/en/Research/Environment/Land-management/Indigenous/Indigenous-calendars/Gooniyandi>
- ◇ CSIRO – Larrakia – MalakMalak and Matngala plant knowledge (PDF): http://www.larrakia.csiro.au/pdf/MalakMalakMatngalaPlantKnowledgeCalendar_CES_PDF%20Standard.pdf
- ◇ CSIRO – Maung Seasonal Wheel (PDF): <http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/images/MaungSeasonalWheel.pdf>
- ◇ CSIRO – Tiwi Plants and Animals (PDF): http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/images/csiro_tiwiplantsanimals_calendar_2014.pdf
- ◇ Daily Planet – 6 Seasons of Gariwerd (video): <https://youtu.be/dQUI0ChQAdM>
- ◇ Ingram, Mike. (2013). My family likes bush tucker. Australia : Oz Publishing Pty Ltd
- ◇ Kakadu seasons (video, duration 2:24): <https://youtu.be/AZo2mmnnvho>
- ◇ Lucas, Diane Elizabeth. & Searle, Ken. (2003). Walking with the seasons in Kakadu. Crows Nest, NSW : Allen & Unwin (Teachers' Notes: <https://www.allenandunwin.com/documents/teachers-resources/380-walkinghomewithmarie-claire9781865085463tn>)
- ◇ Mirima – Miriwoong Seasonal Calendar: <http://www.mirima.org.au/calendar/>
- ◇ Museum Victoria – Forest Secrets – The Seven Seasons of the Kulin People: <https://museumvictoria.com.au/forest/climate/kulin.html>
- ◇ Nyungar Trail – Seasons and Story from dreamtime (video, duration 5:10):<https://youtu.be/ATHvdmzM8q0>
- ◇ Stavrou, Lyndall. & Forge, Jann. (2012). Napangardi's bush tucker walk. [Northern Territory] : Lyndall Stavrou and Jann Forge
- ◇ Torres Strait Islander Seasonal Calendar (PDF): https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/approach2/indigenous_read011_0801_2.pdf
- ◇ Yolngu Sea Country – Observing the seasons: http://livingknowledge.anu.edu.au/learningsites/seacountry/10_observing.htm

Example of completed Worksheet



Seasonal Cycle Worksheet

